. . . come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live;
and I will make an everlasting covenant
with you . . . Isaiah 55:3

covenant

An A.R.E. Membership Course VOL. 3, NO. 10

LESSON XXXIV: Good and Evil

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.
(Job 1:6)

The doctrine of monism is clearly articulated throughout the Edgar Cayce readings, which frequently call our attention to the necessity of examining and remembering this first premise: the oneness of all force. There is only one force, which is called the Spirit or God. It is not a neutral force; it is good. It is life. With the premise of the oneness of all force we affirm that *God is,* that He is *all that is,* and *all that is* is God.

Now, when we come to the question of evil, there are typically three ways we may deal with it: (1) elevate it to a primary premise and thus become dualistic; that is, affirm two realities; (2) deny its existence, calling it the misperception of a lower state of awareness; or (3) affirm its reality, but assume it to be contained or allowed *within* the far greater Reality of one God. The text from Job, "the sons of God came...before the Lord, and Satan came also among them," (Job 1:6) suggests just that and implies that Satan was one of the sons of God. The same principle is indicated in the Scripture in which the word Lucifer appears: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" (Isaiah 14:12)

A summary sketch from the readings of man's origin will enable us to put this event of the fall and evil into perspective. *Before* the beginning, because we as souls are citizens not of just temporality but of eternity, we—as spiritual beings—were perfect and in one accord with the Father. Some of us, in a spirit of rebellion, wanted to be gods apart from God and went astray. With our qualities as co-creators with the Divine and with our free wills, we began to use the one force to create manifestations which were out of accord with the Whole. We turned away from the light and in our own shadows experienced the darkness. What followed is a very complex story, from which much misunderstanding regarding the nature of good and evil has resulted.

One of the problems has been in defining our experiences in consciousness and where they occur. Simplistically, we have thought in terms of three or four places or loci at the most: heaven, hell, earth and perhaps purgatory. A more adequate understanding requires us to consider that there may be many dimensions of consciousness.

Another overly simplistic view encompasses that of a God in heaven, His fallen children on earth, and perhaps a host of angels—some of whom reside in heaven while the rest, led by Satan, live in hell. With the understanding that there are many dimensions of consciousness, we may also consider that the group of souls who fell out of accord with the Whole may have experienced many of these different levels of consciousness and became entrapped in aspects of the experiences related to those dimensions.

Even if we are comfortable with the concept of angels, we may be disinclined to think extensively of the various types of angels and their assignments, of the planes of consciousness in which they work, or of the extent to which they may be *in* or *out of* accord with the one Spirit. These considerations imply a kind of hierarchy in the spirit world. The Bible also implies it, the Cayce readings confirm it, and many reputable esoteric sources have developed the same concept.

A careful study of the following reading will reveal a very subtle and instructive attitude regarding the question of hierarchies:

But as has been given as respecting individuals, "He hath given His angels charge concerning thee, lest at any time ye dash your foot against a stone." It's just as applicable in any group organization as it is in an individual entity. Yet there becomes in the practical application more of a confusion unless the *ideals* and the purposes that are of a spiritual nature are held to.

This is not intended to indicate there are individual souls or entities that have been set aside or appointed by a hierarchy of another realm to look after the affairs, as some would have others believe. Not that they do not, or cannot, but is that thy ideal? Is that *thy* purpose, that it shall become a personal thing? Or is it rather that it shall be a channel through which only the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the universal Christ Consciousness may be applied in the lives and the affairs of individuals in every way and manner? 254-92

This reading suggests that there *is* a hierarchy, and yet, such an attitude toward it should not be our ideal nor reflect our purpose in making that belief a personal thing. Nor should we try to communicate with even the beneficent guardians. Our orientation and trust should be in God. If He sends a messenger, that is good. Hierarchies of helpful beings need not be in our consciousness. Rather each of us should seek to become a channel through which may be applied the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the universal Christ Consciousness.

Nevertheless, to understand the information in the readings on the nature of good and evil, it is also necessary to consider what this information discloses about angels and their hierarchical work. On one occasion those gathered about Edgar Cayce asked for a discourse on the subject of angels and archangels and how they help humanity. He began by saying:

Yes. With the bringing into creation the manifested forms, there came that which has been, is, and ever will be, the spirit realm and its attributes—designated as angels and archangels. They are the spiritual manifestations in the spirit world of those attributes that the developing forces accredit to the One Source, that may be seen in material planes through the influences that may aid in development of the mental and spiritual forces through an experience—or in the acquiring of knowledge that may aid in the intercourse one with another. 5749-3

Now if we can entertain the possibility that there are other dimensions of reality, each with inhabitants—some of whom may be referred to as angels and archangels—then we may question to what extent these beings are in accord with the One Force. Such a question is implied in the beginning verse of the well-known discourse on love in I Corinthians 13: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity..." It may be that many speak with the tongues of angels and have not love. One man was told:

Hence, *seek* to know *His* ways with thee. Not alone by denying that sin or error exists. *True,* sin and error is not of *God*—save through His sons that *brought* error, through selfishness, into the experience of the souls of men, the body by which angels and archangels are separate from the fullness of the Father . . . For, those that have turned their face *from* the light of God can only see shadow or darkness—and that light is only for those far away. Yet, if the soul will but turn to the Father of love as manifested in the earth through the Christ, in this life also may there be seen the light and the glory of a *new* birth. 479-1

Here the expression, "error, through...which angels and archangels are separate from the fullness of the Father," makes it clear that some of these, as aspects of God, are not in full accord with the light of God.

An eleven-year-old girl asked, "Do I have a guide, or guides, in the spirit world or plane?" She was told, "There are ever, for every soul, those that may be termed the guides or guardian angels that stand before the throne of grace and mercy." (405-1) This notion that each of us has guides or guardian angels is confirmed in a statement of Jesus in which He says, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 18:10)

Now many new age thinkers have come to accept a notion of other dimensions, of other spirit beings and of each individual having his own spirit guide. However, some of these thinkers still have great difficulty in contemplating a hierarchy whose purposes are *not* constructive, in the same way that there may be a hierarchy of those whose purposes *are* in accord with the One Force. Many may be, like most of us, neither entirely good *nor* entirely bad.

In questioning the reality of angelic or spirit plane beings whose purposes are out of accord, it may again be worthwhile to study very carefully the exact wording of the Cayce readings.

Q-2. In relation to the oneness of all force, explain the popular concept of the devil, seemingly substantiated in the Bible by many passages of Scripture.

A-2. In the beginning, celestial beings. We have first the Son, then the other sons or celestial beings that are given their force and power. Hence that force which rebelled in the unseen forces (or in spirit), that came into activity, was that influence which has been called Satan, the devil, the serpent; they are One. That of *rebellion!*

Hence, when man in any activity rebels against the influences of good he harkens to the influence of evil rather than the influence of good . . .

Evil is rebellion. Good is the Son of life, of light, of truth; and the Son of light, of life, of truth, came into physical being to demonstrate and show and lead the way for man's ascent to the power of good over evil in a material world.

As there is, then, a personal savior, there is the personal devil. 262-52

What about this influence referred to as the spirit of rebellion and variously called Satan, the

devil, the serpent? Is this only a quality of spirit or does it represent a specific individual? For the same group asking the above question, the following information was given at a later date.

It has been understood by most of those who have attained to a consciousness of the various presentations of good and evil in manifested forms, as we have indicated, that the prince of this world, Satan, Lucifer, the devil—as a soul—made those necessities, as it were, of the consciousness in materiality; that man might—or that the soul might—become aware of its separation from the God-force.

Hence the continued warring that is ever present in materiality or in the flesh, or the warring—as is termed—between the flesh and the devil, or the warring between those influences of good and evil.

As the soul is then a portion of the Divine, it must eventually return to that source from which, of which, it is a part. Will *thy* name be written there? 262-89

In this passage we see that the one referred to as Satan, Lucifer, the devil, is also referred to "as a soul." Let us return now to the introductory text and re-examine it: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." (Job 1:6) The personal identity of this being is referred to many times in the readings as follows: "For the law of the Lord is perfect and ye as a child of the Divine may apply it to the works of thy Lord and Savior, or to His wayward son, Satan." (3541-1)

Again, let us remember that in the Isaiah text referring to Lucifer as "son of the morning," we are told that apparently, when we see him as he truly is, we will say, "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof...?" (Isaiah 14:16-17)

Now how shall we summarize these intimations about the relationship of the spirit of evil and fallen angelic beings with that one whom we know as Satan or Lucifer? We are told that "...man's rebellion and consorting with others for aggrandizing of *selfish* motives *first* brought Satan, or the serpent, into the Eden." (3976-9) Did Satan cause the desire or did the desire invite Satan's entrance?

It is clear in the story of Job that God permitted Satan to tempt Job regarding his faith in God. Thus the cosmic scenario might go something like this: In the beginning all beings were created perfect and were in perfect accord with God. A portion of these, *only a portion,* went astray and became involved in various dimensions of reality. Because souls are co-creators with God, their very thoughts become creations. Those souls who strayed created thought forms out of accord with the Whole. These thought forms became so enmeshed in themselves that the souls did not even know they were cut off from an awareness of their oneness with the Whole. Thus it became God's quest to bring these souls back into a remembrance of their divine heritage and into full accord with Him. To do so required the arranging of experiences in consciousness so that they could become aware of their separation.

As Satan is permitted a role in the story of Job, so some souls out of accord with the Whole began to play a role in this awakening. Though this work brought to some souls a consciousness of pain and separation, it was nevertheless a work of rebellion and self-aggrandizement and thus out of accord with the full nature of the love of God. So we may understand the expression, "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!" (Luke 17:1)

We can see in our experience in the earth plane that many set about deliberately to do evil or injury to their fellow man, by deception, theft or assault. We also see that on occasion those with such intents and purposes band together as a group and attack other individuals or groups. Some of those bands form an extraordinary power structure and a hierarchy of leadership. (Hitler in Germany was one example; the Mafia is another.)

Edgar Cayce said that when we die we are like a tree that lies where it falls. With the transition through God's other door comes little change in consciousness or motivation. If there is an organized hierarchy of those bent on evil in the earth plane, why would there not be one in the spirit plane? We in this country with a population of more than 200 million have set a single individual, our president, as a hierarchical leader with the ability to make decisions that affect the lives of us all. There is not a country in the world in which this is not so; and thus the world population of more than four billion has invested power in just a few leaders who have a great effect on every soul in the earth. If this be so on the material plane, why might it not be so in the spirit plane?

Now what power do these influences have over us? *None,* except what we in our own thoughts, desires and indiscretions open ourselves to. We make ourselves vulnerable by getting out of attunement physically, mentally and spiritually. As we seek expressions or activities that are out of accord, we attune our vibrations to lower consciousnesses much as we would tune a radio to a certain station. By physical imbalances we sometimes open ourselves to other influences, some of which may be from other entities. But more frequently these influences are our own energized thought forms. What is important, though, is that there is One, our Brother, the Christ, who has overcome all and in His overcoming, "All power is given unto (him) in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28:18)

What determines the sources that affect us, whether from a physical, mental or spirit plane? That which opens us to the influence is our

purpose, our motivative force, our intent and desire. Out of our desire we can be in attunement with the Infinite. Out of our desire we can invoke the presence of Jesus. Out of our desire, if it be of selfishness or self-aggrandizement, we may open ourselves to influences that are motivated by that same lower quality of intention. The readings indicate that there are countless entities in the spirit plane who, not taking cognizance of their present state, still want to have a say in the affairs of the world.

Once again it is the ideal being held by the individual that sets the vibration. Again we stress and underline the challenge from the readings that the most important experience for any entity is to know what is the *ideal* spiritually. A man asked, "Is it through the guardian angel that God speaks to the individual?" The Cayce source replied:

Ever through that influence or force as He has given, "Ye abide in me and I in thee, as the Father abideth in me, so may we make our abode with thee."

Then as the guardian influence or angel is ever before the face of the Father, through same may that influence ever speak—but only by the command of or attunement to that which is thy ideal.

What then is thy ideal? In *whom* have ye believed, as well as in what have ye believed? Is that in which thou hast believed able to keep ever before thee that thou committest unto Him?

Yes—through thy angel, through thy *self* that *is* the angel—does the self speak with thy Ideal!

1646-1

Now concerning the question of heaven and hell, it is clear from the readings that they refer primarily to states of consciousness; for example, "For heaven is that place, that awareness where the soul—with all its attributes, its mind, its body—becomes aware of being in the presence of the Creative Forces, or one with same. That is heaven." (262-88)

Heaven is an awareness of our oneness with the Father; thus, we do not *go* to heaven, we *grow* to heaven—for each soul grows to the awareness within the temple of its own body. And without spirituality the earth is indeed a hell. In the subconscious all our acts, deeds and thoughts are ever-present before us. Then we may consider what a hell has been dug by some and what a heaven has been builded by others. To the extent we experience separation from the at-oneness, we are in the state called hell. Nevertheless, there are also realms of consciousness in which many groups with a collective consciousness may reside.

The question of heaven and hell relates to the concept of reincarnation. Some feel that reincarnation eliminates notions of heaven and hell, since the soul through successive experiences grows in greater awareness of its oneness with God. However, a spatial dimension to these movements also exists in consciousness, a dimension related not only to planets but also to solar systems.

Those living exemplary lives in terms of purposes and actions of helpfulness and selflessness toward their fellow man may indeed free themselves of desires that would attract them again to the earth. Others may express the desire never again to incarnate without having purified their desires in such a way as to be truly free from the carnal influences. Thus the readings say, "though a soul may will itself *never* to reincarnate, but must burn and burn and burn—or suffer and suffer and suffer! For, the heaven and hell is built by the soul!" (5753-1)

We see that even if the entity does not incarnate again, there may be elements of desire remaining. As those desires are unfulfilled, they give the discarnate soul the experience of burning.

The real evil is the spirit of rebellion. When we entertain that spirit within ourselves, we open ourselves to influences with similar motives. Do we not say, "Speak of the devil and he will appear"? What does this mean? It means that if we have the consciousness of evil, then evil is present with us.

We say we *believe* in God. Then let us put our *trust* in God. Why entertain others when He is so near? This is the answer: Claim the promise of John 14:1—"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

Study Psalm 91: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust...There shall no evil befall thee...For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." (Verses 1-2, 10-11)

Affirm Romans 8: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?...For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Verses 31, 38-39)

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil...therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live..." (Deuteronomy 30:15, 19)

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